

PSC Consumer Connection



Informed Consumers, Quality Utility Services, and a Dedicated Organization for Missourians in the 21st Century

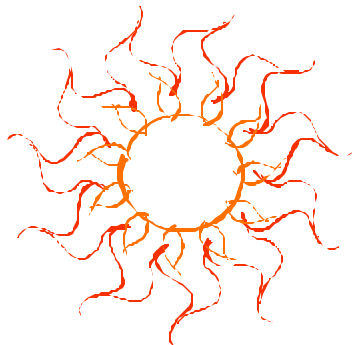
Issue 15 - July 2005

A quarterly publication of the Missouri Public Service Commission
Public Information & Education Department

Some Tips for Energy Conservation

Summer has arrived and air conditioners have been turned on. Now is an excellent time for consumers to evaluate ways to save on their energy bills.

Cooling and heating your home makes up about 44 percent of your utility bill. But, there are all kinds of things you can do around the house to cut down on energy costs.



For example, a do-it-yourself home energy audit can show you problems that may, when corrected, save you significant amounts of money over time.

For more information, contact the Missouri Public Service Commission at 1-800-392-4211.

10 Ways To Conserve Energy

- ♦ Don't constantly move the thermostat up or down throughout the day; this wastes energy and money.
- ♦ Use ceiling fans to help assist in cooling.
- ♦ Turn off lights when they are not in use and consider installing compact fluorescent light bulbs whenever possible.
- ♦ Make sure your air conditioner filters are clean. A clogged filter will cause the unit to run more often – and cost you more money.
- ♦ Plug air leaks around doors, windows and fireplace.
- ♦ Make sure furniture and draperies are not blocking cooling outlets. Blocked outlets restrict air circulation, overworking the cooling equipment and increase operating costs.

- ♦ Close drapes and blinds during the day to keep the sun from heating your home.
- ♦ Use clothes dryers or dishwashers in the early morning or evening.
- ♦ Use only lights and appliances you really need.
- ♦ Use a microwave instead of an oven to cook meals.

Did You Know?

Appliances Account for 20% of Household Energy Use

- ♦ Consider using a programmable thermostat to raise the temperature when the home is unoccupied.



- ♦ Turn down the temperature on your water heater to no more than 120 degrees.
- ♦ Keep storm windows and doors in place to reduce the air conditioning load.
- ♦ Vacuum the coils of your refrigerator, and check for frost buildup in refrigerators and freezers as these cause the appliance to work harder.
- ♦ Don't overload an electric circuit with high-wattage appliances. The normal limit for an electric circuit of 15 amps is 1600 watts. Overloaded circuits can blow fuses or trip circuit breakers, as well as make any appliance on the circuit operate inefficiently, and can be dangerous.
- ♦ Avoid using extension cords with appliances. This cuts the efficiency of the equipment.



Conserve Energy While Cooking and Cleaning

- ♦ Use your microwave, toaster oven or slow cooker. They use half the energy of a regular oven and will keep your kitchen cooler.
- ♦ If you cook on a stove, cover pans and use exhaust fans periodically, as required, to reduce indoor humidity.
- ♦ Wash clothes in cold water with a cold water detergent. If washing less than a full load, set the water level accordingly to suit the size of the load -- you'll save energy and water.
- ♦ Dry laundry on a line to avoid using the clothes dryer. You can put the laundry in the dryer when it's almost dry. Add a sheet of fabric softener to take out the stiffness in the clothes. Clean the lint filter in the dryer after every use.
- ♦ Try to wash only full loads in the dishwasher and use the short cycle. Except for the dirtiest dishes, short cycles work just as well but use less energy.
- ♦ Clothes dryers and dishwashers produce a lot of heat. Use them in the early morning or the evening, not in the heat of the day.

Be Prepared in Case of a Power Outage

With summer storms and tornadoes on the horizon, be prepared for a power outage or loss of natural gas service. Because most major outages are caused by bad weather, start by developing shelter plans for severe storm and tornado conditions.

You can also assemble a "storm kit" for emergencies. Consider including these items:

- ♦ Emergency telephone numbers
- ♦ Flashlights and fresh batteries
- ♦ Battery-powered radio and alarm clock
- ♦ Supply of bottled water (one gallon per person per day)
- ♦ Non-perishable foods that don't require heating
- ♦ Blankets, bedding or sleeping bags
- ♦ First-aid kit and medications
- ♦ Hand-operated can opener
- ♦ Special items for infants, the elderly or family members with special needs
- ♦ Hand tools such as a screwdriver, scissors, duct tape, plastic utensils, paper plates, waterproof matches, and household bleach

Public Service Commission Restores Relay Missouri Surcharge to Ensure Services for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Speech Impaired

The Missouri Public Service Commission has returned the monthly Relay Missouri surcharge to its 1992 level of 13 cents, effective September 1, 2005. The surcharge, currently 10 cents a month per telephone line, appears on monthly telephone bills, and funds telephone access for the deaf, hard of hearing and speech impaired.

"Our goal is to make sure that all Missourians have access to phone service," said PSC chairman Jeff Davis. "The new captioned telephone technology enhances the lives of those who may be hard of hearing and is more cost efficient than traditional deaf relay services. Restoring the surcharge to its 1992 level ensures telephone access to the deaf, hard of hearing and speech impaired," Davis said.

In its decision, the Commission acknowledged that the program's monthly revenues are lagging behind monthly distributions. If the current trend continued and the surcharge was not adjusted, the fund would have a deficit balance by April 2006.

The Missouri Assistive Technology Advisory Council distributes telephone equipment for Relay Missouri. As part of its order, the Commission encouraged the council to educate subscribers regarding the costs associated with both captioned telephone and traditional relay services.

The Missouri State Fair is coming soon!!

August 11-21, 2005

Visit our booth in the air-conditioned Mathewson Building

For printed materials regarding a number of consumer issues or copies of this newsletter, please call 573-751-7491 or email joyce.neuner@psc.mo.gov



Who to Contact: Missouri Public Service Commission
Consumer Hotline **1-800-392-4211**
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